



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of City Coordinator

Date: November 18, 2002

To: Council Member Barbara Johnson, Chair
Ways & Means Budget Committee

Subject: New Central Library Project – Schematic Design

Recommendation:

Approve the New Central Library Implementation Committee recommendation that the City Council amend and restate its previous action with regard to the Schematic Design approval to include the stipulation that the difference in elevation between the sidewalk grade and the interior first floor elevation at 3rd St. & Nicollet be less than 4 feet within normal design and construction tolerances; in addition, the project should continue to aggressively explore opportunities to make the corner of 3rd St. & Nicollet a people oriented, pedestrian friendly space.

Previous Directives:

May 18, 2001 approval of the New Central Library Project Scope, Budget and Schedule.

March 1, 2002 approval of the Implementation Committee recommendation that the planetarium and new library be built on the site of the existing Central Library.

July 8, 2002 concurrence with the Library Board action of 6/19/02 to include a two level parking garage with the new Central Library and dedicate \$2 million of the \$110 million of referendum funds to partially finance the cost of the parking with the remainder to be financed by bonds backed by parking garage revenues.

July 12, 2002 approval of Scheme R that would place the planetarium on the roof of the new library facility.

October 25, 2002 approval of a Schematic Design that lowers the entire building 1 foot 6 inches and results in a facade elevation that is 3 ft. 6 inches above sidewalk grade at the corner of 3rd and Nicollet.

Prepared/Submitted by: Richard A Johnson, Project Coordinator _____

Approved by: John Moir, City Coordinator _____

Presenters in Committee: Richard A Johnson, Project Coordinator

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact - or – Action is within current department budget
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- ☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation
- ☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- ☐ Other financial impact (Explain):
- ☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)

Neighborhood Notification
Neighborhood Notification
City goals
Zoning Code
Other

Background/Supporting Information:

On October 7 2002, the Ways and Means Committee considered and postponed action on the New Central Library Schematic Design to allow for additional work to be done to resolve planning issues related to the 3rd St. facade of the building. On October 21 your committee considered the revised action and moved it forward without recommendation to the City Council. Staff indicated at that time that they would make every effort to craft a compromise to the 3rd St. facade concerns that would satisfy both the Library Board and the City Council.

On October 22, 2002 the Library Board agreed to lower the elevation of the entire building by 6 inches resulting in facade at 3rd St. and Nicollet that would be 4 feet 6 inches above sidewalk level.

On October 25, 2002 the City Council took the following action:

“Approve a schematic design that incorporates lowering the entire building 1 foot 6 inches, lowering the reading area along the perimeter of the building along 3rd St and at the corner of Nicollet 1 foot 6 inches in a width not less than 12 feet 6 inches wide resulting in a facade elevation that is 3 feet 6 inches above sidewalk grade at the corner of 3rd St and Nicollet. An interactive streetscape will be developed to mitigate remaining urban design issues.”

According to Memorandum of Understanding for the New Library Project, when the City and Board take inconsistent actions, the issue is sent back to the Implementation Committee for review and revised recommendation.

The Implementation Committee met on 11/12/02 to reconsider the inconsistent Schematic Design actions. The architects reviewed the development of the Schematic Design including the needs to accommodate the building to its sloping site, keep floors as level as possible and ensure proper drainage. The architects indicated that lowering the entire building 1 foot 6 inches as previously recommended by the Council could result in major drainage issues. For example, if the ground floor were lowered 1 foot 6 inches, the floor elevation at the entry on Hennepin would be at the same level as the sidewalk. Standard design requires that building entrances be at a higher elevation than sidewalks to allow for proper drainage. The building could be lowered 1 foot 3 inches without significantly compromising program or drainage, however. Lowering the building 1 foot 3 inches would result in an elevation differential of 3 ft. 9 in. at 3rd & Nicollet.

After considering these options, and to allow required flexibility in the design process given other considerations including design and construction tolerances, the Implementation Committee unanimously recommended that the Council and Board agree to lower the building so that the difference in elevation between the sidewalk grade and the interior first floor elevation at 3rd St. and Nicollet would be less than 4 feet. The Committee would continue to develop options to further enhance the pedestrian experience on 3rd Street. Committee members felt strongly that the proposed elevation change would provide a positive pedestrian experience, ensure a functional and safe library and enhance the building as a whole.

Richard Johnson will be present at your committee to answer questions.